

Why Do People Accept the Bahá'í Faith?

In spite of many obstacles, according to *Britannica Book of the Year*, the Bahá'í Faith is the second most widely spread religion in the world. (Christianity is the first.) Further, the rate of its spread has been accelerating from its very beginning. The light of Bahá'u'lláh is so dazzling that it attracts enlightened believers and seekers from all segments of society, and from all religions and cultures. These are some of the reasons why so many people have turned to the Bahá'í Faith as the fulfillment of the prophecies of all sacred Scriptures:

- They find that the Bahá'í Faith crowns their lives with hope and a glowing vision for their own futures and for the world. They gain a spiritual and eternal purpose.
- They find the Bahá'í Faith to be the fulfillment of all prophecies and promises made in their sacred Scriptures.
- They find a religion they can practice. They see harmony between their beliefs and their actions.
- They discover that the Bahá'í Faith is built on enlightened faith, not on dogmatism.

- They see harmony between their religious beliefs and scientific knowledge.
- They learn that God has been loyal to His promises and has not abandoned humanity.
- They find a religion that strengthens their family relations and provides clear moral standards for their children and youth.
- They find satisfactory answers to their unresolved questions, for the Bahá'í Faith offers a rational approach to religion.
- They learn they can do something for the world, instead of just talking about its problems.
- Because of the spiritual strength they gain, they experience fewer conflicts.
- They gain a sense of peace and joy that they have not known before.
- They find a community that is diverse yet unified.
- They discover dedicated and trustworthy friends who practice high ethical standards.
- They find that their love for God and humankind grows stronger.

Many people search ardently for happiness. They look everywhere except where it lies in abundance. There are millions of Bahá'ís who will admit to having been quite skeptical about most

or all of the benefits listed here. They will also acknowledge that, to their surprise, their skepticism faded when they saw Bahá'ís living the Bahá'í life.

Observing how the followers of a faith live is the ultimate test of that faith. The people—their ideals and their actions—are the fruits of the religion they follow.

By their fruits you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Christ (Matt. 7:16-19)

St. Paul describes the fruits of the Spirit of God:

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Galatians 5:22-23

Bahá'u'lláh claims to be the Spirit sent by God. He manifests all those virtues to perfection. In His vineyard, good fruits grow in abundance.

Here is a small basketful from the vast vineyard of Bahá'í sacred Scriptures:

O peoples of the world! Forsake all evil, hold fast that which is good. Strive to be shining examples unto all mankind, and true reminders of the virtues of God amidst men. He

that riseth to serve My Cause should manifest My wisdom, and bend every effort to banish ignorance from the earth. Be united in counsel, be one in thought. Let each morn be better than its eve and each morrow richer than its yesterday. Man's merit lieth in service and virtue and not in the pageantry of wealth and riches. Take heed that your words be purged from idle fancies and worldly desires and your deeds be cleansed from craftiness and suspicion. Dissipate not the wealth of your precious lives in the pursuit of evil and corrupt affection, nor let your endeavors be spent in promoting your personal interest. Be generous in your days of plenty, and be patient in the hour of loss. Adversity is followed by success and rejoicings follow woe. Guard against idleness and sloth, and cling unto that which profiteth mankind, whether young or old, whether high or low. Beware lest ye sow tares of dissension among men or plant thorns of doubt in pure and radiant hearts.

O ye beloved of the Lord! Commit not that which defileth the limpid stream of love or destroyeth the sweet fragrance of friendship. By the righteousness of the Lord! Ye were created to show love one to another and not perversity and rancor. Take pride not in love for yourselves but in love for your fellow-creatures. Glory not in love for

your country, but in love for all mankind. Let your eye be chaste, your hand faithful, your tongue truthful and your heart enlightened.¹

Bahá'u'lláh

1. *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 138.



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